

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) Method of preparing a pressure-sensitive adhesive comprising the steps of:
 - (i) providing an essentially solvent-free mixture comprising one or more free radically polymerizable monomers having one ethylenically unsaturated group and at least one free-radical polymerization initiator, wherein the essentially solvent-free mixture comprises less than about 20 weight percent solvent,
 - (ii) partially polymerizing said mixture to provide a partially polymerized mixture exhibiting a Brookfield viscosity of between 1,000 and 125,000 mPa·s at 20 °C and a degree of conversion of monomers to polymer of between 30 – 60 wt. % with respect to the initial mass of the monomers prior to polymerization,
 - (iii) adding one or more free-radical radiation polymerization initiators to the partially polymerized mixture to provide a radiation-curable precursor,
 - (iv) applying the radiation-curable precursor to a substrate, and
 - (v) further polymerizing the radiation-curable precursor by subjecting it to actinic irradiation to provide said pressure-sensitive adhesive, wherein the further polymerization of the radiation-curable precursor is performed in a non-inert atmosphere.
2. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein the partial polymerization of the mixture is performed under essentially adiabatic polymerization conditions.
3. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein the radiation-curable precursor exhibits a Brookfield viscosity at 20 °C of from 1,000 to 150,000 mPa·s.
4. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1 wherein the one or more free-radical polymerization initiators are thermally activatable polymerization initiators.

5. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 4 where the one or more thermally activatable free-radical polymerization initiators are selected from a group consisting of organic peroxides, organic hydro peroxides and azo-group containing compounds.
6. (Original) Method according to claim 1 where the one or more free-radical polymerization initiators are present in an amount of between 0.0005 – 0.5 wt. % with respect to the mass of the one or more monomers.
7. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1 wherein the one or more free-radical radiation polymerization initiators are selected from a group consisting of type I and type II photoinitiators.
8. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein the one or more free-radical radiation polymerization initiators are present in an amount of between 0.25 – 10 wt. % with respect to the mass of the radiation-curable precursor.
9. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein the polymer in the partially polymerized mixture obtained by conversion of monomers to polymer is characterized by a polydispersity M_W/M_n of between 2 and 3.
10. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein the polymer in the radiation-curable precursor obtained by conversion of monomers to polymer is characterized by a polydispersity M_W/M_n of between 2 and 3.
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein the radiation-curable precursor comprises one or more heat-activatable blowing agents.

13. (Original) Method according to claim 1 wherein upon further polymerization of the radiation-curable precursor at least 95 % of the monomers have been converted to polymer.
14. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1 where the substrate is selected from a group consisting of paper, textile, non-woven, polymer, metal or wood substrates.
15. (Original) Method according to claim 1 where the mixture is applied to the substrate by coating or printing.
16. (Withdrawn) Radiation-curable precursor obtainable by polymerizing an essentially solvent-free mixture comprising one or more free radically polymerizable monomers having one ethylenically unsaturated group and at least one free-radical polymerization initiator to a degree of conversion of monomers to polymer of between 30 – 60 wt. % with respect to the initial mass of the monomers prior to polymerization, and adding one or more free-radical radiation polymerization initiators to such partially prepolymerized mixture, wherein said radiation-curable precursor exhibits a Brookfield viscosity at 20 °C of from 1,000 to 150,000 mPa·s.
17. (Withdrawn) Radiation-curable precursor according to claim 16 wherein the polymer obtained by polymerizing the monomers to a degree of conversion of between 30 – 60 wt. % with respect to the mass of the monomers has a polydispersity M_w/M_n of between 2 and 3.
18. (Withdrawn) Radiation-curable precursor according to claim 16 comprising one or more thermally activatable non-encapsulated blowing agents and/or encapsulated microspheres.
19. (Withdrawn) Supported or unsupported pressure-sensitive adhesive tape comprising at least one layer of a pressure-sensitive adhesive wherein the pressure-sensitive adhesive is obtainable by a method of claim 1.
20. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the radiation-curable precursor comprises less than 5 weight percent inert solvents.